

CANADIAN IDYLLS.

BY WILLIAM KIRBY.

Interlude Second.

THE HARVEST MOON

Continued from the 'Canadian Monthly' of April, 1882.

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(Continued from the "*Canadian Monthly*" of April, 1882.)

INTERLUDE SECOND.

THE HARVEST MOON.

"Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvas."

BALLAD.

The cowbell tinkled in the grass-grown lane—
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
As I went singing the old refrain,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose ;
My milk-pail brimming upon my head,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
I met my lover and to him I said :
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
Just now, my lover ! it would be unfair,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
My lips to kiss them, if you should dare,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
So let down the bars and I'll go through,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
And do not kiss me or you may rue—
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose ;
For you shall carry my milking-pail,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
To the old farm-house in the lilac vale,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
The moon was rising among the stars,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
Before my lover put up the bars,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
For he kept me talking till he made me say,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
That where is a will, there is always a way,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose ;
And he carried my milking-pail for me,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
As we walked home by the trysting tree,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
Singing together a roundelay,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
That where is a will, there is always a way,
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.
That night my true lover plighted me—
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose,
His troth for ever and will marry me ;
Bonny is the brier bush, bonnier the rose.

That was the ballad sung in wilful mood
By lovely May, that drew the chorus up
In the refrain. She laughed as girls will laugh:
Who mock at love, unwitting of its power;
How to some happy ones, it brings but joy;
To others, wounds of never ceasing care.
From youthful cheeks will brush the roses off—
And downward droop the lips to smile no more.
Old Clifford laughed, "It was not needed, May!
Your milkmaid ditty we so often hear;
When all the west grows rosy as your cheeks,
And the short grass is soft with early dew;
While from the pasture, come the sweet breathed cows
Behind their shadows, walking slowly home."

He looked at May approvingly, and thought
With touch of pride—"She is of my own kin!
A girl compact of sense and every grace
That makes a woman dear—desirable;
She is my kin—my all—my bonny May!
Her mother left her orphaned to my care;
To love as my own daughter, for my house
Was daughterless, and dull my hearth, until
My winsome May brought to it childish talk
And girlish gaiety—then was my man's
Deep natural longing for a daughter's love
Quite filled and satisfied. For incomplete,
Unfurnished and unsoothed, is he who ne'er
Has childhood's secrets whispered in his ear.

My stalwart sons had all but one left home—
To seek their fortunes, easily found in this
Good land of plenty and of promise sure.
To all who earn the blessing, it is given!
To hear May talk of them was my delight;
Their names and boyish histories—and me
She easily persuaded to tell more;
And every word stored in her memory,
Idealizing it, in woman's way.

Six sober lads were mine as true as steel,
Brought up in industry and fear of God;
Some to the plough have gone to till new fields,
Won from primeval woods with lusty axe;
Some stand the pilot's watch on our great lakes,
Or down the foaming rapids safely guide
The broad loose-jointed rafts, the yearly spoil
Of our vast forests—dense—illimitable.
My younger lads had drank with eagerness
My old time stories of the people's war,
When Brock unfurled our country's flag, and called
For men in its defence, when all rose up,
And 'mid the dust and smoke of victory,
Smote down the invaders of the Forest land.
My two young lads to hear the tale would flush
With martial heat and pride; and when our Queen,
God bless her! called for men to go and take
Sebastopol—and fight for England, who
So often fought for us; they joined the ranks
Of our Canadian regiment, and wreathed
The British colours with the maple leaf.

And now to-day they wear the royal red,
And sentinel Gibraltar for the Queen.

The old man stopped, and for a moment, some
Unbroken words moved silently his lips—
"God bless the lads !" and then : " God bless the Queen !
I gave them to her service, willingly,
As I served her myself. Her future wars,
For Britain's honour and our country's need,
Will never lack Canadians of my kin
To guard her crown and empire evermore."

May's jollity was for a moment dashed
With seriousness—'twas but a moment, when
Shaking her long black hair, in sprightly mood,
Her rosy face, like sunbeams out of clouds
Disparting them, broke out in radiant smiles :
" And now good uncle Clifford !" cried she, " Pray
Undo your censure of my want of power
To win and wear a lover like the rest
Of girls when pleases us. For men the best
And wisest of them are but simple things :
Unlearned in this, to read a woman's heart
Against her will—much more in her despite
To win her love who shuns the fowler's snare—
Some think it easy, who have never tried !
Although for woman's wit, I ever say :
That where there is a will, there is a way ! "

Old Clifford shook his head, " From high to low,
From Queens to beggar-maids 'tis all the same !
Your kingdom is your birthright in our hearts !
And through our hearts, our heads, and hands,
You rule most regally ! So now, dear May !
Rule whom you will, no one will answer : Nay !
Sit down and from our poet cull a tale
That fits this humour, if there be one writ
In that old book you worship. Is there one ?
You know it, I shall warrant, bonny May !
A merry tale that suits this holiday ! "

May flushed a little—frowned and smiled at once,
Her woman's wit was kindled in a flash ;
That warmed her up to mischief. Down she sat,
With mock importance on the witness stone,
And bade her uncle listen with the rest.
Then ran she searchingly her finger down
The yellow pages ; and three times she hemmed,
And from her forehead brushed her drooping hair
While frolic humour glistened in her eyes—
And in the flashing dimples of her cheek,
The tricky sprites of merry laughter, hid
And peeped alternately, like swallows' eyes
Out of their nests at watchers going near.
She first looked up, then down upon the page,
Then closed, then opened it ; as if to say :
" I know by heart this tale that I shall read—
And do not want the book ! So list who may,
And you shall learn how, spite of yea and nay !
A clever girl of Croyland had her way ! "

THE HARVEST MOON.

Cynthia Queen of the Harvest, in full-orbed autumnal effulgence !
 Thou art the lamp of the reaper, the maidens who gathered the gleanings,
 Twining blue darnel and daisies for coronal wreaths through their tresses,
 Led by thee joyfully homewards, with spoils from the stubbles o'erladen,
 Haste to the dew-spangled meadow, where under thy splendour, the dancers
 Merrily trip to the measure of song and of pipe and of tabor.

PART FIRST.

'Twas Autumn, when the days upon a time,
 Were waning from the summer's perfect prime ;
 And deep in August stood the yellow corn
 Ripe for the reaper, on the morrow morn.
 A mile of level wheat and waving maize,
 And verdant pastures, met the eager gaze
 Of two young yeomen, come to claim the hand
 Of Ada Gay, the heiress of the land.
 One north, one south, by different roads they came
 On love's adventure, and to win the game,
 Which farmer Gay had oddly set, to test
 Which of them loved his lands or daughter best.

Now Ada Gay was born in Croyland vale ;
 A girl just perfect to the finger nail,
 From top to toe of every charm possessed
 Which woman wishes for, and man likes best.
 A figure shapely—face a little round
 With constant smiling ; waist—a ribbon bound
 It tight, two spans about ; her skin was fair
 As silver water lilies, and her hair,
 Eyebrows and eyes were dark, of lustre full
 And endless witcheries that never dull ;
 Her dress—not silk—was always modish, neat,
 And showed at once and hid her dainty feet,
 Well shod, well stockinged, ancles trim and clean,
 And with a springing instep like a queen.

From morn to night, her lovers, half a score,
 Said, " she was cold and cruel—nothing more
 She heeded them than heeds the wind that blows
 The chaff when winnowed, and away it goes !"
 She was indeed a little coy and proud
 Towards her admirers of the common crowd,
 Yet smiled on all some times, she was so good,
 And never looked as if she understood
 What lovers came for. With extended hand,
 She turned the conversation on the land,
 On cornfields, pastures, flocks and herds and all,
 But on herself, not once, a word let fall.
 If you were badly smitten and uncapped
 When in her presence, as most likely hopped,
 She killed with doubtful smiles—you never knew
 How mischievous her eyes did look at you.
 Yet was she no coquette, to flirt a part,
 And cheat a lover gratis of his heart ;
 But generous as the sun that shines on all,
 Her right good humour beamed on great and small.

With warmth of welcome gave her hand ungloved,
 Many she liked but only one she loved ;
 And he the only one she seemed to shun
 Encounter with. Although her heart was won,
 She was so coy and shy, in very sooth,
 She would not let him even guess the truth,
 And yet beneath the snow of looks forbid,
 The fire of passion was discreetly hid,
 Till like a swift toboggan down the slides,
 Into her fate at last the maiden glides.

Old farmer Gay by honest thrift was rich
 In good broad lands, and sheep and cattle, which
 Still grew and multiplied, in field and fold,
 And year by year his stockings bulged with gold.
 He trusted not in banks—they sometimes broke ;
 He was his own safe banker, yet when stroke
 Of sad misfortune struck a neighbour—fire
 Or flood, or sickness, ruined crops that byre
 And barn left empty, he was first to aid,
 And lent or gave as the occasion bade ;
 But rather gave than lent, for so said he,
 All that I have is God's good gift to me
 Wisely to use, but not to make my own.
 The treasures of the field, the Lord alone
 Is master of. And thus had farmer Gay
 Enough to use, enough to give away,
 And oft a round of proverbs he would chime
 Like sleigh-bells' jingle in the winter time

- “ Waste not and want not.” “ Sloth is Satan's rent.”
 “ It is too late to spare when all is spent.”
 “ The honest farmer who would live and thrive
 Himself must either hold the plough or drive.”
 “ With seed to sow or harvest to cut down,
 Must eschew idleness, and jaunts to town ;
 Nor gossip at the inn with Jack or Jill,
 And only tittle at the cider mill.
 “ A yeoman gets by industry and thrift,
 But he grows poor who tries the sorry shift
 Of laziness, to live upon his wits,
 “ A ragged pauper in the end he sits.
 “ Things got by honest labour stick and stay,
 “ And it is getting not to throw away,
 “ And yet in giving wisely is great gain,
 “ God's paradox—Old Gaius made it plain :
 “ There was a man, though some did count him mad,
 “ The more he cast away the more he had ! ”
 And thus the jovial farmer, conscience clear,
 Lived by these rules and prospered year by year,
 A friend and counsellor in word and deed,
 Advice and help he gave to all in need.

He liked to talk about the good old time
 When all the world, as he, seemed in its prime,
 And life was worth the living, “ For,” said he :
 “ Canadians were like brothers frank and free,
 Good men and true, in courtesy well met,
 Whene'er they came together, for the debt
 Of help they owed each other ; none were strange,
 And none unworthy, and in house and grange

Were welcome all, receiving welcome back,
 However far we travelled, was no lack
 Of hospitality at every door,
 Where night o'ertook us, and our only score
 Was not king's coin ; but kindly words to stay,
 Or, come again, when we should pass that way."

Thus farmer Gay lived on for many a year,
 Rich both in wisdom and in worldly gear,
 When like a prudent man his will made he ;
 And Ada his sole child and heiress, she
 Was to inherit all, with pots of gold
 Laid by for dowry, so the tale was told.
 If she would marry one her father set
 Of two to choose from, Ada was to get
 One half her fortune down, with house and land,
 And plenishing, and all things to her hand.
 In all the country round, the richest prize
 Was Ada Gay, whose black and sparkling eyes,
 Fair face and figure, men admiring swore
 Were worth her dowry twenty times and more.

And so it happened when his intent was known,
 That brace of lovers sauntered up and down,
 All hours between the early and the late
 And always stopped before the garden gate.
 But not for sake of dower in truth did they,
 But for herself, make love to Ada Gay.
 Sometimes invited in, and sometimes not,
 They talked with her and sighed, were cold or hot,
 Just as she pleased to warm or chill them ; they
 Sat in her parlour often half the day.
 While she played music, sang or laughing said,
 All sorts of nonsense running in her head.
 Hours flew like minutes in her presence, till
 The one forgot his farm, the one his mill.
 Their work, their workmen, while the harvests call
 In vain upon them, they neglected all,
 For sake of Ada, when they came to woo,
 Till farmer Gay declared ; " It would not do ! "

" He hated idlers ; " said he, " Men of sense,
 Who with a woman make no vain pretence,
 Will work their six days out, in day-time bright,
 And only court by moon or candle light.
 On Sundays only wear best coats and shoes,
 And walk to church, where cosy in the pews,
 They turn their prayer-books, over, and forget
 The text, next minute whispering to get
 The place from her, who turns a willing ear,
 And only what the parson says, can't hear."

They were two manly fellows and good friends,
 Who scorned to gain unworthily their ends.
 They were in love up to their very ears,
 And both had hopes, and both alternate fears,
 For Ada Gay although her mind was set
 On which she liked the best, you could not get
 From her a word or sign, to show the way
 Her heart inclined, and neither night nor day

Could one or other of them feel assured,
 Whether his fate was to be killed or cured.
 When Ada married, which would be the guest
 Or which the bridegroom? People said with zest
 And tasteful lips, "The chance was two to one
 That she might jilt them both, ere she had done,
 And then look round the country everywhere
 To find a better man if one was there;
 Each prater saying this, drew up an inch,
 With nose in air, and thought, "At such a pinch
 Why might not I be he? In better hands
 Could never fall the charming Ada's lands!
 And I could spend her money with the best,
 Were Ada Gay my wife and all the rest?"

But farmer Gay had better fish to fry,
 And knew well, who was who, and what to try
 To settle Ada's balancing, and make,
 Her steady as a rock for Randal Blake,
 Now Randal Blake was active as a hare,
 And strong of limb and purpose as a bear,
 Good natured very, good at work or play,
 And ready for adventure any day.
 He was besides quite rich in house and goods
 Broad fields well tilled, orchards and noble woods,
 Fat oxen, horses, sheep and all the clack,
 Of feathered fowl, of which he had no lack.
 Yes! Randal Blake deserved the blues and reds,
 Of ribbons, won at fairs for thoroughbreds,
 In bulls and horses, beating Smith and Jones,
 A farmer to the marrow of his bones.
 And all he wanted to complete his life,
 Was Ada for a helpmeet and a wife.

But Ada had her fancy, and a will
 To find a way to what she wanted, till
 Sweet as she was, and affable in speech
 No lover's craft or art could overreach
 The pretty heiress, who had formed a plan
 To please herself in picking out the man
 Who was to wed her; although farmer Gay
 Was planning out for her, another way.
 "If Randal Blake be his first choice," she said,
 "'Tis Simcoe Lake alone whom I shall wed!
 Him and none else, unless I change my mind,
 Which is the right divine of woman-kind."

Now Simcoe was a yeoman, handsome, slim,
 Lithe as an Indian, and as straight of limb,
 With hair brown as an otter's, foot as spry,
 As ever drew a girl's admiring eye,
 Good natured, clever, rich in every way,
 But he felt not quite sure of Ada Gay;
 More deep than he, her secret Ada hid
 In her own bosom, sometimes half forbid
 His suit, and tried to look a little grim,
 That he might not be sure she favoured him.
 If too successfully she played her part,
 And Simcoe took her coldness much to heart,
 She prayed for thunder, or some odd event,
 To show him, without telling, what she meant;

Wished she could tumble in the lake, about
 Waist deep, when he was by, to pull her her out,
 Or wrecked together, each the other save
 Upon a desert Isle, where in a cave,
 A hermit lived, who offered out of hand
 To marry them, soon as they touched the land,
 And they complied, and so in that odd way,
 Of day dreams, oft was married Ada Gay.

Now Simcoe Lake was of the good old stock
 Of true Canadians firm as granite rock—
 Brought up and nurtured, as a sacred thing,
 In fear of God and honour of the King ;
 Of purest blood without a single stain
 That darkened by a drop his loyal vein,
 In his forefathers' day when rebels set
 The Continent in flames, and fought to get
 By rank secession—and the Empire's fall,
 For their own selves, the heritage of all ;
 And when the land was rent from Britain's side,
 A hundred thousand of the pick and pride,
 Of all the Continent rose up and went,
 New pilgrims exiled into banishment.
 A hundred *Mayflowers* sailed, and night and day,
 The noblest of the country bore away
 To newer Plymouth rocks—more blest by God
 Than Puritan or Pilgrim ever trod.
 Northward and Eastward went they bravely on,—
 Some laid the deep foundations of St John.
 Some planted in New Scotia's vales of gold,
 A new New England, nobler than the old.
 The broad St. Lawrence and the waters deep
 Of blue Ontario welcomed them. While leap
 For very joy, Niagara's tameless floods,
 To greet their coming to his ancient woods.
 Wisely and well they laboured to create
 The fabric of a vast and loyal state,
 Confederate with the Empire—heart and will,
 Through years and centuries growing grander still,
 And thus did they restore a hundred fold,
 In their new lands the losses of the old.

Of that good stock came Simcoe Lake. His home
 Broad fashioned by his father in the combe
 Of two lowhills, "the Place of Oaks" was called
 Bright windowed, and verandad, and well walled,
 Upon its timbered gable, carved fair,
 "Fear God, honour the King," stood lettered there.
 Two generations had beheld the glow
 Of fiery summer, turn to wintry snow,
 Rude nature change her old primeval face
 Of savage woods to cornfields—room and space
 For flocks and herds to graze in pastures green,
 Where ran a brook, out of a wild ravine,
 And turned the wheel of an old dusty mill
 That clacked and rumbled half way up the hill.

Though nature changed, changed not the hearts of gold,
 Who in the "Place of Oaks," kept as of old,
 A roomy chamber for the weary guest,
 Where none unwelcome came, who stopped to rest.

The roving Indian or the yeoman known,
 Kinsfolk or strangers all alike sat down
 At the broad table diapered and spread
 With linen white as snow, to meat and bread
 Of purest wheat, and dainties such as none
 But our Canadian housewives make alone.
 Then after supper by the roaring fire
 Of winter logs what tales and songs inspire
 Of Wolfe and Brock, and the heroic band
 Who came with Butler to this forest land !
 Or haply in the glorious summer nights
 Before the bed-time stars put up their lights,
 Stretched neath the oaks they talked the hours away
 With cheerful stories, mixed with rustic play
 Of country humour to the occasion pat.
 But oft in graver moods conversing, sat
 In judgment on the present and the past,
 And even the future, boldly they forecast.

Some had been pioneers who searched the woods
 For their fresh treasures. Some had braved the floods
 Of foaming rapids. Others from the cold
 Dense wintry forests, with adventures bold,
 Bought spoil of mighty game, the elk and bear.
 While others told of lands far distant, where
 Blue skies and prairies slumber breast to breast,
 Unroused as yet from their primeval rest.
 Lands which one day would wake as from the dead,
 And feed the hungry world with meat and bread.

Their minds expanded thus with broad survey
 Of our Dominion growing day by day,
 And the still grander Empire throned and crowned,
 Which links it to the world's remotest bound.

That old Canadian home like many more,
 Preserved its own traditions and the lore
 Of history, related with a clean
 And truthful tongue, of all things that had been
 The pregnant cause of long and angry jar—
 The revolution, and the spoil and war
 That basely mingled in the great debate
 Of principles in our Imperial state,
 And making two, where one had been before,
 Wrenched ruthlessly apart for ever more.

Old heirlooms valued in that house were found,
 The father's sword hung on the wall new bound
 With garlands once a year, in honour due
 The loyal soldier who had worn it, true
 To King and country. Deeds and papers grey
 Of old Colonial lands were stowed away
 In antique drawers. Commissions with the ring
 Of martial life upon them, which the King
 Had granted to their race, who one and all
 Were ever ready at the trumpet's call
 To go to battle full of pith and power
 Stout yeomen who turned soldiers in an hour,
 Who left the plough, and gun or sword in hand
 Met all invaders of their native land.

A flag of silk deep blue and crossed with red
 Was draped with care, and in an alcove shed
 The radiance of a glorious past that blent
 Our country's fame with Lincoln's regiment.
 The word "Niagara," wrought in brodered gold
 Recorded honours won in days of old.

Beside young Simcoe's desk were books a few,
 Not richly bound but priceless, whence he drew
 By frequent reading of the choicest lore,
 The seed—thoughts of the world, the garnered store
 Of new ideas that leap to life in time,
 And fill the world with progeny sublime.
 A century we may wait to see their power
 But it will come sure as the Aloe's flower.
 In Shakespear, Milton, Bacon, and the Book
 Of Books—God's own—whoever will but look,
 Shall find the gold of Havilah, alone
 Matrix of truth, Bdelium and Onyx stone.

A daughter of the house with pencil rare,
 Had painted skilfully some pictures there.
 Simcoe and Brock, heroic men and grand,
 The Founder and Defender of the land.
 Her father's wise—her mother's comely face
 Both full of kindness and truth, and grace
 Of old Colonial breeding in the days
 Before the deluge came of antique ways.

A landscape too of that majestic gorge,
 Where up and down, the stream and eddy forge
 Against each other past the rocky walls
 Of wild Niagara's eagle haunted halls ;
 That savage solitude where foot of man
 Walks warily, and seldom as it can.
 For the fell rattlesnake still haunts the glen,
 And broods and basks in many a stoney den.

Another, was a Grecian girl, intent
 With quivering lip and eye, on the event
 Of some grand tragedy of Sophocles.
 An ancient church in England, over seas,
 Revered as the old cradle of their race,
 Upon the wall found an abiding place.
 The old French thorns donning their robes of green,
 In rustic portraiture were also seen.
 Another showed the verdure of the spring
 With millions of wild pigeons on the wing.
 But, in the place of honour was the King.

Now evening came which melted into night,
 And that in turn was swallowed up by bright
 And hungry stars, that silently looked down
 In solemn judgment, without smile or frown,
 Or sign or wonder, that might haply show
 A consciousness of human life below.
 The wind had fallen, with no leaf astir,
 Yet was the air alive with endless chirr
 Of insect life nocturnal, and the flight
 Of fireflies flashing through the summer night.

These things provoke to sleep, and to their beds
Household and guests retire with sober heads
Not fearing for the morrow, certain they,
God for the morrow cares, as for to-day.

INTERLUDE THIRD.

Thus far May's tale. Some called a halt, to think,
Some looked quite wisely round, and with a wink
Of approbation said : " It is a tale
Quite homelike and and as rustic as a rail."
" They liked " they said, " a story told so plain,—
About themselves—not castles built in Spain.
But picked up by the light of common day,
As treasure trove upon the king's highway.
Where they could share in every hope and joy,
The poet's song revealed, without alloy."

Old Clifford listened, as May's reading sped,
His ears took kindly in each word she said,
His eyes were steadfast, filled with deep content,
When she spake of the Lincoln regiment,
Where he had worn a sergeant's sash, and fought
As every true Canadian did, and ought ;
But far too manly, he, for boast or praise
Of his own deeds in those heroic days,
You would have known him long, and well before
You learned from him, how many wounds he bore.
Some still unhealed and painful, yet no trace
Of discontent was on his manly face.
To learning though he made but small pretence,
By nature he was gifted—full of sense.
Had studied, profited and come to know
From life's experience more than books could show.

He broke the thread of May's pretended tale,
And gaily cried, " You carry too much sail,
My pretty May ! Your story's all afloat
And drifting seaward like a fisher's boat
Blown from the shore—to lose with long delay
The market for your fish. A single day
Will spoil its freshness—and your story here,
I don't remember it—with eye or ear.
I doubt our poet dreamt it—and that you,
For our amusement only dream it too !—
Before it ends your hair will be uncured
And Ada's wooing reach the other world."

May with a rosy blush unruffled said :
" Dear Uncle, do not judge why maidens wed,
And long or short the tale—slow, fast or coy,
Or labyrinthine as the walls of Troy—
You'll find as all roads lead to London, this
Will surely lead at last to wedded bliss.
And Ada Gay and he who is her choice,
Will underneath the harvest moon rejoice."

May bit her lips in every pretty shape,
To keep the laughter in, that would escape ;
And spoil the mischief she was bent to do
And set her crowd of listeners laughing too.

She stood upon her seat—the witness stone,
 And made her hustling what had been her throne.
 “This tale,” said she, “I read out of the book,
 Out of it, mind!” and then she gave a look
 Half-mischievous, and tried in vain to frown,
 And turned the page adroitly upside down,
 “You now shall hear what poet never writ
 Before or since, of woman’s ready wit,
 To win the man whom she resolves to wed,
 And lose the one, she wants not—spite of dread
 Of guardian’s preference. This tale will show
 That love is his own judge—much better so;
 And though blindfolded he can clearly see
 Which is the pleasantest for him and me.”

THE HARVEST MOON.

PART SECOND.

“*Incultæ pacantur vomere sylvæ.*”

Old farmer Gay was jolly as his name.
 Fresh-faced and always smiling, as became
 A yeoman with two miles of well-cleared land,
 Broad in the sunshine lying to his hand.
 With other miles beyond of forest fair
 That overran the slope of high Belair,
 Where bright Ontario’s waters in full view,
 Bound the horizon with a belt of blue;
 Wheat fields and fallows, meadows, pastures green,
 With flocks and herds at intervals were seen.
 Each side a brook, where clumps of sycamore,
 Broad-leaved and shady, from its bank looked o’er.
 A shallow pool, where cattle to their knees,
 Stood ruminant and silent at their ease.

The great old-fashioned house of farmer Gay,
 Stood at the turning of the King’s highway,
 High pitched and gabled, with a broad Dutch stoop
 That ran its length festooned with many a loop
 Of climbing roses, blossoming and sweet,
 With lusty chairs well cushioned for a seat
 Of comfort, when midsummer rays struck hot
 And rest from work was sought in that cool spot.
 A sweeping elm gigantic, overhung
 The entrance gate that free and easy swung
 Upon its hinges, turning either way—
 Repelling none, where all were free to stay.
 The very dogs that stretched upon the grass
 Looked friendly when they saw the stranger pass.
 A pretty garden climbed the sloping hill,
 With orchards flanking it, and cider mill.
 Great apple trees set out in rows and squares,
 Past counting, intermixed with plums and pears,
 Where trellised vines and peaches turning sweet
 Might tempt a second Eve to pluck and eat.
 The barns and byres were painted brown or red,
 With weather vanes that rattled overhead,
 The barnyards were alive with cheerful din
 Of crowing cocks and clucking hens. Within

Were ducks and geese and turkeys, fatted calves,
 And pigs in litters, squabbling, not for halves,
 But all of every thing. Plump, sleek and fat
 Were all, from stabled ox to dog and cat.
 The very mice in glossy jackets run
 About the corners, and enjoy more fun
 Than any town or city mouse, away
 In Newark or in York, where people say,
 The careful housewives have a frugal thumb,
 That never drops or wastes the smallest crumb,
 But sweeps all clean soon as they draw the cloth,
 And not a scrap is left for mouse or moth.

The house and household stuff had been the pride
 Of Ada's mother, when she came a bride
 And helpmeet worthy of young farmer Gay.
 Not empty handed either—as they say.
 She had as had each daughter of the land
 Her own fair dowry when she gave her hand ;
 The good King's gift—two hundred acres round,
 To every child of loyal lineage found,
 Born or adopted on Canadian ground.

Fat sheep and comely kine, her dowry swell,
 A hoard of old doubloons was hers as well,
 Won in the war, and saved by honest thrift
 Of her good father for her wedding gift.
 By waggon loads her household stuff came in,
 Such things as maidens gather, to begin
 Their wedded life—as natural as the bird
 To build its nest, are they divinely stirred.
 She also brought soft feather beds like down,
 And linen spun of flax, both bleached and brown
 Her girlish work, while dreaming of a time
 The wedding bells for her would gaily chime.
 Rugs, quilts and cushions—all that makes life soft
 And easy for a man—with patchwork oft
 Reminding her of kinswomen and friends,
 Who wore the patterns of these odds and ends ;
 With lots of things besides, both great and small,
 And Ada was the heiress of them all.

One night the friendly rivals for a bride
 Had joined the farmer's cheerful ingle side
 Where each paid Ada tribute of his smiles,
 Nor missed a word, as sweetly she beguiles
 Them both a little, in a woman's way.
 And will to neither, signal yea or nay !
 She takes their flatteries without other view
 Than takes the Queen the homage is her due ;
 Yet to herself—in secret whisper said :
 " I know 'tis Simcoe Lake whom I shali wed !
 I like young Randal well enough, but part
 With him, for sake of Simcoe, who my heart
 Has wholly in his keeping, though he knows
 But little how I love him ! I propose
 To set my dear old father on a plan
 To work against himself—and for the man
 Whom I decide for, and the world shall see,
 That Simcoe Lake deserves a girl like me ! "

She sat beside her father with her chin
 Upon his shoulder—ran her fingers in
 His grizzled locks and whispered in his ear,
 And kissed him then, to make it plain and clear,
 When she had told him all her pretty plan—
 “Now don’t forget!” she cried—and off she ran!
 Old farmer Gay looked grave, resumed his pipe,
 Took a huge puff and then began to wipe
 His brow in some perplexity—in doubt,
 How Ada’s odd suggestion would turn out—
 And yet—thought he—the girl is too discreet
 To wed a man who keeps the lowest seat,
 When he might take a higher one! and so,
 As Ada will—I let the trial go!

“Simcoe and Randal, both!” he said, “come up,
 And take with me a bright and brimming cup
 Of wine—my own Catawba, cool as snow—
 Yet full of Indian summer’s parting glow.”
 He laid his pipe down gently—brushed the crumbs
 Off his broad waistcoat—where he thrust his thumbs:
 His features beamed forth with a hearty smile,
 Might have been seen or felt for half a mile,
 “My boys! to give a preference I am loth,
 And truly wish I had a wife for both!”
 He said—and added—“But with only one,
 Half of my wish of course, is left undone—
 I will not choose betwixt you—and I find
 My daughter too, is puzzled in her mind—
 She vows that she will write and ask the Queen
 What she shall do? There is no other mean
 To find out her own mind, and what she wants,
 And how to get it—ere she gives and grants
 Her promise to a man, to love and cleave
 To him till death! And truly I believe
 The loyal little witch would gladly wed
 A wooden gate post if the Queen so said!
 But there’s no fear of that! I trust that she
 Will be advised and guided now by me,—
 While I sat here to night, a little plan,
 I rubbed into my head, which if I can,
 With help of you but carry out—we may
 Decide which is to marry Ada Gay.”

The young men looked with very open eyes,
 As if expectant of some great surprise,
 Half fearing it and doubtful, Randal Blake
 Looked rather blankly—more than Simcoe Lake,
 Who somehow caught a glance of Ada’s eye,
 As she ran off, and guessed the reason why,
 She fled so swiftly, like a boy at play,
 Who throws down a petard and runs away.

Yet ran not Ada far—in love’s duress,
 She leaned against a tree with half caress,
 Of elbow up, and palm against her head,
 And listened eagerly to all they said.
 When farmer Gay spoke up: “There is a man
 In Smoky Hollow, makes a boast he can
 Twixt morn and night, cut down and bind, and shock
 Six acres good of wheat, and then will knock

The first man down he meets, who dares dispute
His title to the name of best repute
Among all reapers, cutting fast and through
The best of them, however much they do.

"Now I mistrust a braggart's wordy noise,
Six acres are a man's work, not a boy's,
I grant—but I have seven acres shown,
Well shocked upon the stubble—and then thrown
The best man off his legs, upon the green
For sport—before my supper, and was seen
No boast about it. Every body said :
That Roger Gay, in Lincoln, born and bred,
Could cradle wheat the most, and turn a man,
The stoutest of the Smoky Hollow clan
Upon his back, and oft on training day,
I put down half a dozen in that way,
With our old colonel looking at the fun,
Without reproof, if drill had been well done;
But if it had not—than beware to try
Such merriment, if he was haply by!
The men all liked him—but he would let out
A word or two, that made you look about,
If you stepped awkwardly, or dressed your ranks,
Less straight than sergeant's halberds—or played pranks,
When marching past, with drums and fifes in tune,
Upon the old King's birthday—fourth of June!
O! days of youth, the heavens were clear and blue!
We seemed to drink them—and our hearts were true,
And hands were strong to meet by night or day,
Or friends or foes whichever came our way!
The wear of time as yet had touched us not,
Our country here was just the freshest spot
Of all the earth—and loyal to the core,
Our men were good and true—our women more
Than angels in the house, where night and day
They never ceased with love to watch and pray.
Simcoe and Randal, I will make no vow;
But this I say, before I tell you how;
A winner not a loser he will be,
Who gets my Ada with consent of me!"

Simcoe replied,—“Well said! with youth and health,
He who gets Ada has enough of wealth!—
A treasure in a treasure house! for she
In her bare-feet were rich enough for me!”
He glanced towards the spot where Ada stood
Behind the tree, as red as Riding Hood,
“Simcoe” she thought “looks at me with both eyes,
And thinks no other girl so fair or wise—
For said he not that I—how very trim,
‘In my bare feet were rich enough for him?’
And barefoot I would wed him on the green,
And think myself as happy as a queen!”

“But Randal! what say you?” the farmer asked,
“To choose one of you, Ada must be tasked;
And yet she will not drop the smallest hint,
But looks and laughs, and says, ‘tis plain as print,
Which of you God ordains that she should wed,
If either, and then asks, ‘What I have said!’

What I should think ? or what would haply do ?
 If she should wed to please herself—not you ?
 If she should marry one from Hudson Bay ?
 Or where the west winds gather on their way,
 The smell of prairie flowers ? And then she comes
 And twists me by the fingers and the thumbs,
 To make me tell—and vows in her old style,
 She would not travel from her home a mile,
 For all the men she ever saw—but one,
 And he won't have her. No, if she went on
 Her bended knees ! I doubt it much ! and so
 There is no telling how the game will go ! ”

Now Randal was the soul of honour, and
 Would not have thrown a single grain of sand,
 Into the scale, to give it half a cast
 Unfairly, but he rose and slowly passed
 His hand across his forehead—as in doubt
 How the old farmer's story would turn out.
 He felt a coldish breath, his face upon,
 But bade him briskly with his tale go on !

“ I have no tale at all ! ” he answered straight,
 “ The girl is full of fancies—’tis her right.
 Ada's caprices, I account no fault,
 You cannot catch her with a pinch of salt,
 ‘ Try all things, and hold fast to what is good,’
 Is just the text, she says for maidenhood.
 But I have an odd fancy in my crown,
 Which from her perch, I think will bring her down,
 And make her walk with careful measured tread
 As when she bears a milk-pail on her head.

“ Down in the valley yonder, where the stream
 Meanders through it, flashing in the beam
 Of moonlight—stand two fields of golden wheat.
 Both ripe and ready for the reapers' feet
 To enter them to-morrow, and cut down
 The harvest drooping heavily and brown.

Simcoe and Randal, mark ! what I intend
 You two shall do striving as friend with friend,
 To reap those fields with cradles, as of old
 Our fathers worked, like men of pith and mould ;
 Not with machines to rattle out our grains
 When there is but one harvest for our pains,
 There is no need why life should go so fast,
 The whole year's work does just four seasons last,
 But yeomen then won guineas by the plough,
 For silver dollars they can boast of now ? ”

“ I now say this ; that reaping shall decide
 Which of you two wins Ada for his bride,
 Those two fair fields of equal acres found,
 Each one shall cut and bind, and on the ground,
 Set up his sheaves, and he the prize shall win,
 Who reaps the fastest, Ada will give in,
 I think, but would not swear it, she may say ;
 She will have neither ! with emphatic Nay !
 And if she does ; you understand that she
 Must have her way, in spite of you and me.”

Next day the rising sun came flaming up
 The red horizon, and from out the cup,
 Brimful of Lake Ontario seemed to sip
 A moment as he rose, with dainty lip
 The bright blue waters, sweetest that he found
 In all the circuit of his daily round.
 "Good morrow ! maids and men !" he seemed to say
 As all woke up to greet the rising day,
 The trees hung full of diamond drops of dew,
 Which fluttering birds in glittering showerlets threw,
 With gorgeous summer tints, the garden flowers
 Purple and red and yellow lit the bowers,
 Dahlias and asters proudly take the room
 Of violets and roses out of bloom,
 The silver water lilies, from their beds
 Deep in the pools, wake up and lift their heads
 To greet the sunshine, while the thrushes fill
 The air with music, turn which way you will !

Before the sun was up, rose Simcoe Lake,
 And promptly by his side was Randal Blake,
 Bright as the morn also, rose Ada Gay,
 To see the two young yeomen start away,
 She blushed like a carnation, as they passed,
 Though neither saw her, for her blinds were fast
 And curtained thickly, all but one small rift ;
 Where she peeped through, half slipped, hair adrift,
 And one bare foot as alabaster white,
 And eyes like stars that sparkled with delight.

A bosom friend she had, blue-eyed and fair,
 Composed of all the spices, lovers swear
 They find in woman. She stood by her now,
 With one white arm around her, brow to brow,
 And stealing, when she could, a glance that hit
 The narrow opening, Ada would not quit.
 When Molly Bland half laughing, crying, spake ;
 " These are both men worth loving ! I could ache
 For one of them ! though I should burn like fire,
 If either spake to me what girl's desire,
 Their one true love to say. But I forget,
 One is my cousin. Randal is my pet
 Of cousinly young men. But I confess
 That Simcoe Lake is handsomer—in dress,
 And bolder too I think, for but last night
 He kissed me in the forfeits with delight,
 Seeming like preference, but it was not so,
 For we are second cousins as you know !
 And should not marry, 'tis a thing forbid
 In cousins whole or halves. So if he did,
 He nothing meant of harm in kissing me,
 Just in the forfeits kneeling on his knee,
 With you beside him holding up the light,
 To see the forfeit paid, and paid aright ! "

Cried Ada, quickly, " Molly ! do not pinch !
 Say what you please, you cannot make me flinch,
 The law in love is this, which you forgot,
 That cousins you may kiss, half-cousins not.
 For my own share, I give you Randal Blake,
 I know you want him, I will Simcoe take,
 Because that he wants me and he will mow
 The world before him, ere he let me go.

Simcoe will win me, Molly ! you will see,
 The prize is his, for it depends on me.
 I am, you know, a girl of no pretence,
 To swim a river or to leap a fence,
 Or climb a tree, or ride a ragged colt,
 But I will give you leave to call me, dolt !
 If I am at a pinch the least afraid
 To help my lover win a willing maid."

"What will you do ?" cried Molly, quickly warm
 With new emotions rising like a swarm
 Of bees about her. "Tell me, dearest, do !
 For I may go the self-same road as you.
 I am a weak girl too, no heroine,
 I can't do much, I was not made to shine.
 I am not pretty even, no, nor wise,
 I cannot hide my heart behind my eyes,
 I like to be persuaded to give in,
 To those I love, who tell me 'tis a sin
 To be hard hearted, cold and rarely kind,
 Nor twice alike in my inconstant mind ;
 And yet how little one would read me through,
 Who thought me cold, hard-hearted or a shrew ;
 If Randal Blake would fancy me and say ;
 He loved me ; think you, I would answer ; nay ?
 I could not, would not, I would gladly take
 My bundle and go barefoot for his sake,
 If it were needed, but it will not be !
 For Randal is in love with you, not me."

The young men passed, the maidens quickly threw
 The window open, and looked out anew,
 With heads together, rosy chins apeak,
 And breezy hair that swept each other's cheek,
 They watched the reapers down the grassy lane,
 Pass swiftly to the fields of golden grain,
 Which overtopped the fences with a flood,
 A yellow sea, that islanded a good
 Thick clump of maples, left for shade and rest,
 For man and beast with work and heat oppress.

The girls half dressed, and Ada barefoot quite,
 Knelt at the window, until out of sight
 The reaper's almost ran, as of intent,
 To win a bride before the day was spent
 But little thinking when the day was through
 It would be found that they had captured two !
 The batch of harvesters, and farmer Gay,
 All ran to see them, some with much display
 Of knowledge, said, while looking wisely up,
 "The prize they reap for, is a silver cup,
 Set by the farmer's club !" "A county prize."
 Some said it was, "or else a wager," cries
 Another, "It is for a hundred pound
 Of Halifax good money, round and sound ;"
 While others just as positively swore,
 They strove for victory and nothing more !

At morn the two began to reap the wheat,
 Up to the nineties rose the quivering heat,
 And still they worked, the scythe unwearied swung,
 They laughed and jested, as they gaily flung

Fatigue aside, and so, hour after hour
 Cut down the fields to stubble, while the power
 To work seemed equal, both in strength and skill,
 In manhood, spirit and obdurate will
 To conquer in the strife, nor would they rest
 A single minute, but with fiery zest
 Outwrought the sun, and when the day had flown
 No one could tell which of the two had mown
 Most acres, swathes or strokes, for to a straw
 Their work was equal, and the match a draw !

The sun-tanned crowd of reapers sat that night,
 Upon the lawn out in the full moonlight,
 Disputing, arguing, as each liked his man,
 Split straws and hairs ending where they began,
 They argued it at supper, and in bed,
 They argued all the night till morning red,
 And none gave in, but some for Randal cried,
 And some as stoutly held to Simcoe's side,
 And swore that on the morrow all would see,
 He was the best man, his the victory !

When sunset faded and the world turned gray,
 Strewn with the ashes of another day,
 Beyond the elms rose up the harvest moon,
 Broadfaced and magnified, kind nature's boon,
 For busy husbandmen—to help them win
 Their ripened crops and get their harvest in."
 As sat the men disputing loud and long,
 Came Ada out with cider brown and strong,
 That sparkled like old wine, to keep them there,
 While she and Molly for their work prepare.

They tucked their dresses up, and 'kerchiefs brown
 Tied on their heads, to keep their tresses down ;
 Well shod to brave the stubble, and aglow,
 Each with a rake, the eager maidens go.
 "I do not care," said Ada, "what men say,
 Let them dispute, while we will win the day.
 Simcoe shall gain this match, and also me ;
 Randal shall lose it, but will then be free
 To marry you dear Molly ! blossom crowned,
 If you have wit to catch at the rebound
 His heart—I tell you it will surely fall
 Into your fingers like a bounding ball.
 A year ago he liked you, Molly Bland,
 Nor would have fancied me, without my land.
 He would not marry me just for my eyes,
 And dowerless, I truly were no prize—
 Except to Simcoe, who would gladly take
 Me for myself alone, and true love's sake.

Red as a rose blushed Molly, with surprise
 And pleasure sparkling in her deep blue eyes.
 She thought the plan was perfect, and quite sure
 Of full success, to work a speedy cure
 For all her heartaches, "Now I feel," said she,
 "The honeymoon of a new hope in me !
 If Randal loses, I shall win a chance,
 Something must grow out of the circumstance !"
 Molly the more she turned it in her mind,
 The more resolved the wheat to rake and bind.

Hour after hour their moon-light labour sped
 When all the household else had gone to bed.
 The sheaves they bound by dozens and by scores,
 In yellow heaps they piled the precious stores.
 "The prize is won," cried Ada, "All is right!
 And Simcoe Lake shall be the lucky wight,
 Who marries me—and then the world can say:
 That, 'Where there is a will there is a way'!"

Next morning early, shouts of wonder greet
 The waking house—that bound was Simcoe's wheat.
 They all jumped out of bed and ran to see,
 Half dressed as happened, what the thing could be.
 The lads ran first like deer—the men gave chase,
 The dogs went barking after in the race.
 Simcoe ran out, and Randal. In full view
 Ada and Molly and the maids pursue.
 And after them, the last, came farmer Gay,
 Hatless and coatless,—for he guessed the way
 The wheat was bound, and yet his jolly throat
 Was filled with laughter, as he chanced to note
 The look in Ada's eyes brimful of fun,
 Demurely asking him "what had been done?"
 He blamed himself for total lack of sense,
 In not foreseeing, that by no pretence
 Can man deceive a woman's heart, and give
 Her where she likes not—and expect to live.
 Then heavily her father sat him down,
 Quite out of breath, and feebly tried to frown
 Stern as a judge, who with his finger points
 At some poor culprit trembling in his joints,
 He failed egregiously. As down the lane
 He looked and saw her running back again.
 "The witch has toes of quicksilver," said he,
 "They are too nimble for the like of me!"
 An instant more, his neck was in a yoke
 Of two white arms—a shower of kisses broke
 Upon his face like bubbles—ere he had
 Time for a word—to utter—good or bad.

"I did it father," cried she, clasping tight
 Her arms about him, "and worked all the night
 To bind up Simcoe's sheaves, assured if you
 Had been a girl, yourself had done it too!
 A woman's heart is not her own, to give
 At others' bidding, else I would not live
 An hour in disobedience to my sire;
 But marry any one at his desire.
 Try me with any ordeal that you know,
 As touching red-hot iron, or in snow
 Run bare-foot out—and wood and water bring
 To do your bidding in the hardest thing.
 And this to my life's end would rather do,
 Than marry one I love not—wouldn't you?
 Nay, do not answer me, dear father, yet,
 But let me wipe your brow of angry sweat.
 O, I would gladly sit, and always wipe
 Your face like this! and fill your evening pipe,
 And mix your silver mug of punch, with spice
 And lemons—everything to make it nice!
 Or for your supper toast and broil and dish
 All sorts of dainties—squirrels, birds and fish.

Sing, play and talk, and then at bed-time take
 Your loving kiss, and sleep or lie awake.
 Happy in either as a daughter should,
 Who loves her father rightly. O, I could
 Consent to live forever in that way,
 And never change my name from Ada Gay !
 But if you will be rid of me, and try
 To wed me where I love not—by-and-by,
 My nature would be changed and you would see
 The crossest of old maids grow up in me !
 For till my dying day, a vow I take
 That I will marry none but Simcoe Lake !”

The farmer grimly smiled ; but word not one
 Could he get in, for Ada's talk ran on.
 “ I do like Simcoe best, you know,” she said,
 “ God made it so, for love is only led
 By liking. Yet dear father if you scan
 The country over ; there is not a man
 More worthy of a woman's love and life,
 To marry and obey him as his wife,
 Than Simcoe Lake, and if he will have me,
 I'll bind his sheaves forever. So you see
 Dear father ! I am done for, life and limb,
 If you refuse to let me marry him !”

Old farmer Gay looked kindly on her face,
 Red with her eager pleading—and a trace
 Of doubtful tears—not many. Just a pair
 Of diamonds in her eye lash, trembled there,
 And when they dropped, the farmer bent his head
 And kissed her for forgiveness, and he said :
 “ A woman's heart is lightly on the latch
 For him to lift it, who was born to catch
 Her fancy. But to one unloved before,
 She is a locked and double bolted door !
 That God has made it thus I rightly know,
 And Simcoe's wheat is bound no matter how,
 So it is done, and you are well content,
 My daughter, with the labour you have spent,
 And count as gains, all losses for his sake !
 I give you leave to marry Simcoe Lake.”

Think now was Ada glad. In her great joy
 She could have danced, but suddenly grew coy
 And very grave, struck with a chilling doubt.
 Would Simcoe take her since, she was found out ?
 Would he accept the work that she had done,
 And claim the victory which she had won ?
 Poor Ada then began to quake, and knelt
 Beside her father's knee. Until she felt
 Simcoe's strong arms about her, who had sped
 With all his might to claim her, blushing red
 As his own bride, so feately won and soon,
 In this great reaping of the Harvest Moon.

Her father shrewdly guessed the sudden pain
 Of anxious doubt, that occupied her brain.
 He nothing spake, but took her willing hand,
 And into Simcoe's placed it. No command
 Of arch magician wrought such sudden charms !
 An instant more and she was in his arms,

Betrothed and promised, and the happy day
 Fixed for their wedding. Then said farmer Gay,
 As he among his reapers gravely rose,
 "One thing there is which I shall now propose,
 For our brave Randal. If I do not err,
 He is far better off than having her
 To be his torment !—for my Ada here,
 Has made her choice for Simcoe, very clear,
 And Randal truly, will more easy find
 In Molly Bland, a maiden to his mind !
 What say you Randal ? and dear Molly, you
 Will not say nay, for coyness ? If you do,
 Randal will make it yes—so let it be
 A double wedding and the world shall see
 Two pairs of lovers crowned with golden wheat,
 And such a wedding feast, I'll give you, meet
 For our King's daughter, if she wed this way.
 A whole roast ox upon the lawn all day,
 And all the fiddles bring from Newark Town,
 And tambourines, for footing up and down
 The country dances, Moneymusk and Reels,
 That put quicksilver in the dullest heels,
 And such a feast of platter, dish and cup,
 With pitchers all atilt and then filled up !
 With all the country side to eat and drink
 And dance all night and never sleep a wink !
 Toasting afresh the bridegroom and the bride,
 Wishing them health and wealth and all beside !

Randal took Molly's hand, and whispered low,
 Something that set her features all aglow.
 What I know not, but shyly she looked up,
 And drank his words, as from a silver cup
 One drinks good wine. Said she, "I did not bind
 The sheaves for Simcoe ! Truly no ! my mind
 Was not on him, but through defeat to score
 For you a victory which will ever more
 Requite you for the loss of Ada Gay !
 For I love you my Randal, night and day."
 She raised her rosy lips. He kissed her then.
 And Randal Blake was happiest of men !

L' ENVOY.

May shut the book. It had been upside down,
 She tried in vain to wear a little frown,
 As in a study—whether to go on—
 Or stop—or laugh it off. When every one
 Clapped well their hands, and cried, "that is a tale
 Worth all the rest ! Read on ! dear May ! nor fail !
 To finish it !"

"But it is done" she said,
 "Love stories end with weddings ! I have read
 A score of them. That is—tales of delight,
 That make one read in bed by candle light
 To hours forbid and very bad for eyes,
 Tho' elders say, we must be sage and wise
 And stay at home and wait, and stitch and sweep
 And only dream of lovers while asleep !"

Old Clifford slowly shook his head. "I see
 My pretty May, you are too wise for me !

Your story like a salmon fly, you cast
 Into the river, and you take at last
 The very fish you want, but never hook
 Drew that gay story from the poet's book!
 No poet made it! Though 'tis true as time,
 And happened in my own young lusty prime,
 For I danced at those weddings all the night,
 And at the infares with renewed delight.
 For one whole month, the fiddles were in tune
 All through that famous harvest honey-moon

It was the year before the war. I know,
 When men began to get into a glow
 Of angry heat, at rumours flying in
 Like war birds from the States. 'Let it begin,'
 They said in Congress, where in factious flood
 Rose up again the old Rebellious blood,
 "Now England's mighty hands are full. At last
 Her flag is half way down upon the mast!
 All Europe in her front with banded war,
 And France to lead them her opponents are!
 Canadians are but few and fight or not,
 We are enough to sweep them off the spot
 Of land they claim as theirs, gifts of the crown,
 Which we will take when we have put them down.

Randal was brave and loyal to the bone,
 A true Canadian, better man was none
 Of all the thousands who together rose,
 When Brock called out for men to meet the foes,
 He had been wed to Molly but a year,
 When she girt on his sword without a tear,
 Till after he had gone, when floods she shed,
 Uncomforted, for in her heart a dread
 Deep and prophetic lay. Thoughts come and go
 We know not whence or whither. Signs of woe
 Too oft they are. And all to Molly bore
 This burden, "Randal will return no more."

The war broke out, with glory for our land,
 And with the foremost Randal took his stand
 In its defence, saluting with his sword
 Detroit's surrender—while the cannons roared
 For victory. Invasion's neck we broke
 And Michigan fell at one royal stroke!
 But Randal's fearless eyes saw but the morn
 Of glory's seeding, not the ripened corn.
 Among the first he fell on Queenston rock,
 Beside Macdonald and heroic Brock.
 Willing to die that Canada might live
 Its own true life of honour, and to give
 Assurance of its pledges made of yore,
 Our Empire never shall be broken more.

Young Simcoe bore him from the field of fight
 Where he lay bleeding on the stony height,
 And in his arms he died, nor lived to see
 Our noble dead avenged that day, when we
 The army of invaders headlong cast
 Beneath the yoke, disarmed in crowds at last,
 Till Newark overflowed, while through the town,
 The flags half mast for grief drooped sadly down,

And strong men in the street wept tears of woe
 That Brock was dead though conquered was the foe.
 O ! Life was worth the living in that time,
 When our great land was in its youth and prime,
 When every man laid by his private feud,
 And party rivalry at once subdued.
 And all together struck blow after blow,
 Until the land was free of every foe,
 And we at peace held all our own and more,
 With fame to keep and conquests to restore.

Like music from the sea, there come from far
 Dear voices hushed on earth, fair forms that are
 Fair as the fairest that are here to-day,
 The parents in their children seem to stay,
 And from their eyes look out perplexing me
 If they are you, or you are they, I see.

But what became of Molly ? some began
 To ask in whispers. O for such a man,
 She should have stayed a widow all her life.
 So said the girls—not all. "To be a wife
 Is always better !" others said. Therefore
 One can't do better always. Thus they tore
 Comment to pieces. Clifford then replied :
 "Molly remained a widow till she died.
 Simcoe and Ada are both here to-day,
 With children half a score as tall as they.
 To keep the name of their old loyal race.
 The boys as brave, the girls as fair of face.
 And all as good as gold, as true as steel,
 In mind and body sound from head to heel."

When Clifford so far spoke, May knew that he
 Forgave her girlish prank, for was not she
 Herself grand daughter of stout Simcoe Lake,
 And Ada her grand dame, whom she saw shake
 Her finger at her often, as in tune
 She told the story of the Harvest Moon ?
 May whispered to her uncle, "I was near
 Forgetting why I made it, for I fear
 I know too well what love is, like the rest
 Although I kept my secret in my breast
 Imprisoned till to-day ; so you can see,
 How very wise untaught, a girl can be !
 And you will doubt no more, that, yea or nay,
 Where is a will there always is a way."

May stopped perforce. A rush of bounding men,
 Some white, some red, together shouted then,
 For victory as through the distant goal
 They drove impetuously the flying ball.
 Long limbed and picturesque, Lacrosse in hand,
 They played it well each side a stubborn band,
 But what they played for and what came of it,
 Is quite another story, bit by bit
 Interpreted out of the Indian tongue,
 To our young poet by a chief among
 The stately Chippewayans and as true
 As Wampum wrought with beads of white and blue,
 That never lies however books may do.